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FATE AND I AND OTHER POEMS

Gerda Dalliba



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Fate and I

And Other Poems

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Number 35.

Gerda Dahlbom



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FATE AND I AND OTHER POEMS

By
Gerda Dalliba



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TO
MY FRIEND
MRS. ELLA WHEELER WILCOX
THIS LITTLE VOLUME
IS GRATEFULLY
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Fate and I

OH, you and I, Fate, are two gods, I trow!
You, god of the future, and I, of now.

I watch to-night, with a fair delight,
Over the mountains the waning light.
Yet, when the day-beams stronger grow,
It is you, yourself, who may lay me low!

Oh, you and I, Fate, are two gods, two kings!
And Life is the spoil for which each flings
The royal strain of his purple blood—
Like in a wood, a panting flood
O'er the wild woodlands leaps its way—
I with to-night, and you with to-day!

And yet, as I watch in the spring sky warm
The brooding heat of a thunder storm,
Nor ever fear t'will not disappear:
So I hold you calmly, though close and near!
And, as deep mosses within a stream,
To-night I lie by myself—and dream.

Strength

WE cannot all be noble, Yet I ween,
We all can have the strength that
Atlas bore,
And hold the Earth securely on our arm.
They cry to me : “ God’s will be done,”—they
Of little strength, but of tremendous faith.
And with lips clenched to bleeding, I reply:
“ God’s will be done.”

Yet I have little faith :
It seems to me, the tide has moments when
It palpitates between the silver sands
And the deep bodied bosom of the sea.
So palpitates the soul ’tween life and death.
We die more often than we think. Upon
Each passion we are laid a limpéd corpse ;
And are reborn to Earth alone in Thought ;
And strength grows in us as the ruddy will
Keeps emotions back from outward show,
Pulls a smile across the face—and says :
“ I’m happy ! See, I’m smiling ! I can take
Thy care unto me, as a summer plant
Absorbs the moisture from the atmosphere.

My heart a canvas is: take thou and paint
In thine own shade. My soul's a viol: play
Thy music out upon me, and rejoice!
I'm strong—for what I feel thou shalt not know."

Sorrow

I SAW a woman bend her head
Over a grave beneath a tree.
Woman, I know thy love is dead !
But still my love is dead to me.

I saw her lift a small white hand,
And pass it slow across her eye.
Woman—I know—I understand—
Yet mourn we most for those who die ?

I saw her fix with tender care
Flowers, with fragrance resting deep.
Woman—there are no flowers there
Where my love lies, and fell to sleep !

And suddenly I saw and heard
A red-breast robin come that way,
And—Oh my God ! There is no bird,
Where rests my love, to wake the day !

Ah ! woman, can'st thou ever know,
'Mid memories and grasses tall,
That in my heart my love did grow
Alone—and died there ? That is all !

Love

LOVE was born of a thought, and a passion,
Down in the Heart-world, far away ;
Beneath the sweep of the Earth and
Ocean—

Beating upon it night and day !

Beneath the sky, where God's hand trembled
Dragging the planets into place.
Beneath the court, where Heaven assembled,
Seraph and Saint to see its face.

And all the universe coming in terror
Gazed upon it—but named it good.
God baptized it, and freed it from error,
Giving its charge unto maidenhood.

To Keats—A Sonnet

I THOUGHT, in the vast shade of yonder
tree,

Endymion lay, upon his floweret bed—
As o'er the darkening meadow and the sea
The young moon rose triumphant overhead.
And then you came, Keats, came straight unto me,
With all your sweet perplexity of tone—
Of what in dreamland distant far might be,
And what upon this earth was felt and known.
I wonder if you find now what you sought,
And languished for, and found not and so died?
No grand philosophy of deed, or thought,
Was yours—Your ideals were the ones that hide
Behind the clouds—the romances God wrought,
To set within the spheres where saints abide!

Rain

THERE are tear-drops on the window pane!
Who is weeping? Heaven—
What from thee can be withheld?
What grief unto thee given?

A Sea Myth

TO ———

AH, many a song has been tuned to the harp,
With network of silvery rhyme.

Through the modulations of flat and sharp,

You may hear the heart-beat of time.

Ah, many a poet has dared to part,

The rose from its Southern clime,

And place an icicle next its heart,

In singing a song sublime.

And though the Sea has been lost in its foam,

I dare to sing of the Sea—

And then my fancy wandering home,

Has brought back my verse to thee.

I

Under Eubœa's isle,

Under Jupiter's smile,

Under the Earth—God's wile,

Making triumph and trial,

The home of Neptune rests in turbulent seas.

The waves beat on the shore

Of Earth that Heaven bore

Upon its breast of yore,

Yet knoweth not of Ocean's mysteries.

II

Waves are foamed in white
On a summer's night ;
They mould themselves in shapes of young half
moons.
Before the Sun departed
And Earth was broken-hearted,
It shone there with full glory at its noons.

III

Yet the deep of green
That is seldom seen
Lies laced in between,
The surface Sea, and its endless, fathomless bed.
And there the mermaids fair,
With floating sea-swept hair,
Still lull the drowned with songs that please the
dead.

IV

Under the Earth and Sky,
Under fair Greece's eye,
Homes of the Sea-Gods lie,
As oft in times of Greek supremacy olden.
In under the white foam's breast,
In under the green lights pressed,
Where the surge has sunk to rest,
In under Eubœa, Neptune's palace is golden.

V

Golden palaces,
Golden lattices,
Golden trellices,
And yet, a golden throne for Neptune's seat.
With golden courts below
Where mystic mermaids show
All of their woman part, with beauty sweet.

VI

Golden chairs for queens,
Nymphs of stately mien,
Upon whose faces fair the monarch looks,
With Spirit-Solitudes
There stolen from their woods
And from their distant rivers, lakes, and brooks.

VII

Lights that tinted strange,
With an opal's range
Of colors, habitate the watery way.
And yet they are the sprites
That ship-men see by nights,
And they who sleep, and find their rest by day.

VIII

Mosses deep, unseen,
Old, and yet as green
As verdant meadows under soft spring skies.
And some like yellow grains,
Where the young harvest reigns
In tinted orange and in golden dyes.

IX

Shells with voices sent
From the reeds that blent
Pan to merriment,
As when from out the woods he laughing ran;
And yet, with pensive strain,
Where wilful nymphs complain—
And of a great love-pain
Born to creation, when the world began.

X

Phosphorescent plants,
Clammy cold sea-damps,
And all the pungent life that Nature breeds
Where men can never know,
And where the poets go .
Alone when thitherward a soft dream leads.

XI

Gorgons with icy glance
Frozen within a trance
To motionless inertia doomed to stand
Like now, on sea-shore capes,
The snow is piled in shapes
Of livid monsters, by the Ice King's hand.

XII

Sirens, singing sweet
Melodies, full meet
For lover's bowers, under fair moon-beam ;
And yet whose perfumed breath
From roseate lips means death
To those who listen to their song—and dream.

XIII

Harpies, woman-eyed,
Looking wan and wide,
Yet forever tied
To foul bird-bodies, claw, and flapping wing—
And every creature there,
Both horrible and fair,
That the deep waters bear
Where they upon the Seashore's bosom fling.

XIV

In the spacious hall
Where the shades would fall
Covering over all—
If haply the warm Sun were there to die—
Bright-blue lights from the wave
Had colored all the cave
Where Proteus and Triton sat on high.

XV

Poloyphemus—wide,
Heavy, tired-eyed—
Sat by Glaucus' side
While they held converse there somewhat apart;
When suddenly there came
A flash of greenish flame
That lit the cave and shivered every heart.

XVI

Amphitrite the pure
Hung her head demure
On Neptune's knee, and trembled with affright;
For it was Circe there,
But her wild look was fair,
For she had banished Scylla, the past night.

XVII

Now the afternoon
Lulled the cave with droon
Of heavy waves that roaréd on and on,
When Neptune rose with state,
And for his bridal-mate
Took from the deep a regal sapphire crown;

XVIII

Placing the shimmering band,
With his feeble hand,
Upon her head, while crimson was her face ;
And every eye was cast
And fixé firm and fast
Upon the wonder of her perfect grace.

XIX

Sea-Gods standing there
Felt their wild hearts stir
Gazing straight at her,
Who long ago had come from out the West,
When Neptune's monarchy
Had threatened all the Sea—
Not yielding quietly
Unto his sway upon the waters pressed.

XX

For in Cronus' reign,
 Ere the Gods were slain,
 By Neptune—Pluto—Jupiter—the three
 Great sons who stole away
 Their Father's—Cronus'—sway,
 Oceanus ruled all the boundless Sea.

XXI

Oceanus old,
 Hoary Tethys cold,
 Pontus there, the bold,
 Then dwelt beyond the bound'ries of the Earth
 Within a western cave,
 And felt a tidal wave
 Upon their Kingdom lave
 Of the old Dynasty, with Neptune's birth.

XXII

Nereus there wed—
 Though on a sea-bed—
 Doris, a nymph, who bred
 Fifty fair daughters to the dying race ;
 And one was as a dream,
 With golden hair a-stream,
 And soft, fair eyes a-beam—
 And the new East-God gazed upon her face.

XXIII

For upon a day,
Now long passed away,
Winds and waves astray
Swept o'er the land that kills the setting Sun.
And where the nights are found
And on the drear Earth bound,
There rose a battle sound
Of Neptune's arms, and the old reign was done.

XXIV

Far from out the East,
Like a frenzied beast,
The monarch Neptune rode full wrathfully,
With dolphins golden-maned
And iron-hoofed, and trained
To bear the royal chariot o'er the Sea;

XXV

While the Earth upreared
Forest-locks, and feared
For her far lands that neared
The bound'ries of her furthest western coasts:
For with vast Time, that goes,
New Gods will rise—and rose,
And fierce with battle throes
Upon the old, who seemed like withered ghosts.

XXVI

And the myriad throng
Pass like notes along
In Progression's song,
Sung through the age-chords, and by parting life.
Each God with his libation
The rise of each new nation,
Each man (a whole creation)
That born—gives birth and dies within the strife.

XXVII

On that day now set
In the amulet
Of the dead past, Neptune had fought the throne
Of the old Dynasty
For the supremacy
Across the boundless sea,
And then proclaimed both East and West his own.

XXVIII

On the last blue line
Of the western brine,
Markéd straight and fine,
There rose a low cry as of agony.
For while the old Gods fought
They still were overwrought
By the vast strength and thought
Of Neptune of the Younger Dynasty.

XXIX

By Neptune's trident hand
Unyielding Fate did stand,
With a firm command
Upon her lips, and new thought in her eyes ;
And perchance the old Gods saw
That they must now withdraw,
Or only felt the law
Of withered flesh upon their cheeks and thighs.

XXX

But the victor—he
Pauséd suddenly—
A daughter of Nereus old stood there ;
'Twas she who was the dream,
With her fair eyes a-beam
And her gold hair a-stream,
And mosses caught upon her shoulders bare.

XXXI

From his chariot far
Like a shooting star
Descended he to where dull waters rise,
And dripping from the foam
He raised her—bore her home—
The starlight playing in his wayward eyes.

XXXII

Now, the afternoon
Lulled the cave with droon
Of heavy waves and blue and emerald light ;
And the long years had sped
Fast o'er their bridal-bed ;
And waved the shadows of each happy night,

XXXIII

Since upon that day,
Now long passed away,
Winds and waves astray
Swept o'er the land that kills the setting Sun ;
And he the old Gods fought,
And them had overwrought,
And his own prize, fair Amphitrite, had won

XXXIV

While the sapphire crown
Brilliancy shot down
Of long blue shadows on the fair girl's form,
And Juno's peacock dyes
Still glistened from her eyes,
And on her cheeks swift raged the crimson storm.

XXXV

Now, where fields are held,
And the forests felled
Clean by the axe, and small birds winged to nest,
Sang out a sunset bell,
And the wild shadows fell
With the fond Sun's farewell;
And all the meadow-workers sought their rest.

XXXVI

Underneath the lands
Where Eubœa stands,
The dew-time fell, but with no outward show,
And there waves resonant,
And green and blue and constant,
Still beat with steady, wailing, ceaseless flow

XXXVII

Then with the dying day,
Sea-Gods stole away—
The River-Gods, and Nymphs of Fountains—
Naiads,
To depths below, above—
Sang sweet unto her love
Fair Amphitrite, beneath the rising Pleiads.

Song of Amphitrite to Neptune.

“ I am the growing-one
Born of the Flowing-One ;
Over the glowing-one
I sweep my long hair.
In the East tremblingly,
Faltering and musically,
With low head bendingly,
I kiss Neptune there.

“ Born in the western cave,
Deep, I my bosom lave
Deep in the briny wave,
To make it gleam white.
I command the waves’ roaring,
The large Sea-gulls’ soaring—
But all this ignoring,
I bend to thy sight.

“ The mystic revealing
Of infinite feeling
Upon me is stealing,
Oh Neptune ! Oh King !
The wild ruby’s burning
To dull red is turning,
Beside the all-yearning,
That I to thee bring.

“ The unsteady motion
Of old Father Ocean
Bringeth no notion
Of glory—of space.
Upon thy heart lying,
Upon thy lips sighing,
Oh Neptune ! and dying,
I bury my face ! ”

XXXVIII

Far, as in a dream,
O'er sea and lake and stream
The moon rose ; over town and lane and field ;
And unto babes new-born,—
Old people, tired, worn,—
A soft beneficence its rays did yield.

XXXIX

But below—below—
Where the waters flow,
With their ripples slow,
In silver on the dark heart of the deep,
Pure Amphitrite's fair charm
Lay on the hoary arm
Of her King Neptune, who did soundly sleep.

XL

High within a tower
Swung the midnight hour
From off a church-clock on village green ;
And far into the night,
As souls in search of light,
The steeples in the sky did rise and lean.

XLI

But, Oh the briny foam
And crested wave, where roam
The tossed wrecks of broken ships once sailed !
The North wind reaching far
To South, from polar star,
Upon th' infinite breast of Ocean wailed.

XLII

In the spacious cave,
Underneath the wave,
The anxious Sea-Queen turned from side to side,
Fair Amphitrite, the pure.
And what hath woke thee ? “ Sure
Thy monarch sleepeth well beneath the tide.”

XLIII

Tears fell from her face—
What a fair, wondrous grace
There is in weeping! Quiet lay he there,
While o'er his wayward beard,
And long, and strong, and seared,
Her sweet lips fell, and on his brow and hair.

XLIV

On the bounteous Earth
Fair Morn had her birth
In regal splendor of a Sun's fresh grace,
That in the sky was bound.
Upon the Earth was found
The dew, and light upon the mountains' face.

XLV

But under the Sea
Lay a stern mystery—
The monarch there raised not his lordly head.
Upon his body prone
Lay Amphitrite alone—
She wept her love—her Neptune—who was dead.

Rondeau Redouble

THERE is no strong yet unfulfilled desire,
Thought is the Slave of Mind, and
 Dream of Soul,
The Heart is master of its burning fire,
 And these three monarchs have supreme
 control.

Within all spheres there is no mystic goal
 To which sane complex Thought cannot
 aspire—

All Ages unto progress hand their scroll :
 There is no strong yet unfulfilled desire.

Sweet Dream need use no artifice t' attire
 Drear Life in beauteous garb. Her aureole
Will lend the pale face a celestial fire—
 Thought is the Slave of Mind, and Dream
 of Soul.

The emotional Heart, it is still great and
 whole;
 Its own musician, it can wake the lyre
Of yearning, where the mighty tone-waves
 roll,—
 The Heart is master of its burning fire.

The Heart, the Mind, the Soul, they are entire
Rulers of joy. The Heart, the Mind, the
Soul ;
For they shall ever reach toward something
higher :
And these three monarchs have supreme
control.

And they were monarchs when the body stole
Into existence, and did strength acquire.
And they are monarchs when the grand bells
toll
A lingering farewell o'er the funeral pyre.
They have no unfulfilled desire.

Villanelle

UPON my heart my lady lies,
Her hair is blown across my cheek,
And blinded are my tearless eyes.

Oh God ! a voice within me cries,
My sinking breast has grown but weak ;
Upon my heart my lady lies !

Vain are all prayers, and wishing sighs,
“ Her hair forbids my lips to speak.”
And blinded are my tearless eyes.

The strong resistance in me dies,
Before her face my soul is meek—
Upon my heart my lady lies.

Her mouth that burns upon me tries
My love to agony to pique,
And blinded are my tearless eyes.

Dear rhapsody of rhapsodies,
Dear Heaven that I dared not seek,
Upon my heart my lady lies,
And blinded are my tearless eyes !

A Prayer to Orithyia

(*A Ballad*)

'**T**IS Aquilo in the tree,
Beauteous maiden list and hear!
For he doth sing heart feelingly
To a fair one he loves dear.
Beauteous maiden lend an ear
To his wild love's northern strain,
Grave, impassioned, and austere;
Full of anger, full of pain!

Hear the wild blast: it is he!
Feel the snowflake: 'tis his tear!
'Tis his yearning strife for thee.
At the tempest have no fear,
'Tis thy lover's wooing, dear:
Madness he cannot restrain—
Grave, impassioned, and austere;
Full of anger, full of pain!

Orithyia, glorious is his plea,
Decked in language harsh and drear,
And not fit the garb to be
Of his love, at least sincere.
In an iceberg atmosphere
Grows a powerful hurricane—
Grave, impassioned, and austere;
Full of anger, full of pain!

Endop

Emotion, nymph, thou can'st revere,
Though return not, nor retain :
Grave, impassioned, and austere ;
Full of anger, full of pain !

On the Death Mask of a Poet

FEATURES dead with mouth forever
Silent as a frozen river.
Lips that never wake, nor quiver—
Never more with life's light, never.

Sunken cheek, and brow projecting,
O'er the great Mind's heart, reflecting
On the future, and expecting
Death which now upon it lies !
Lips where unrepressed Desire
Built herself an altar-fire,
Rising ever higher—higher—
Only satiate with the skies !

Straight and aquiline and slender
Nostrils that revibrate—tender—
All the fine emotions render,
That pass in and through the Soul.
Chin, that if the dead were risen,
Would denote a large precision,
Which would conquer world or vision
Through the vastness of control.

Eye-brows great and massive, lying
On the forehead. Eye-balls trying
To express the bosom's sighing,
When the poet suffered dying.

A Night in the Michigan Wild

HID within the deep wood of a Michigan
wild

I have seen a small river couched down
like a child

At the foot of great pine trees which, stretching
above,

Pay the sky, as the river prays them, for its love.

And upon that small river bank, winding and
bending

Amid pine trees, and fir trees, and beech never
ending,

The wild roses are clustered, and sunbeams are
too,

And the shadows of night fall majestically
through

The joined branches, and touch it! Ah wait!
Let me try

To describe that weird scene, where the North
beauties lie.

Here the dome of the heavens is deeper and
clearer,

And yet, even the grey of the dull days bends
nearer

The world here, than within the soft tropical
South;
And still further away at the wide river's mouth
The North skies and the waters have met, and
the still
Of their passion-embrace is not broken, until
The fond wind has at last found the long finger
tips
Of the trees and then presses them with its
moist lips.
And still looking to landward, the far rugged
haze
Of the higher hills rises upon one's rapt gaze,
That will shroud with the veil of the soft morn-
ing mist
All the bright inland lakes at their feet, and will
list
To the break of their waters upon their own
brink,
While wild roses grow redder and redder, and
sink
'Neath the blushing within their calm, fair river
glass
At the beauty they see in themselves. But
alas!

That the ferns must be hid in their close and
wild wood,
Which alone for the past generations have stood
All unseen in their hermit-like silence, austere
And unchanged in the Spring and the cold dying
year.

A dull, dark night had come to the river, as fast
As if one might be watching a round sun full
past
Its burnt horizon waning, and ah! one might
feel
One had entered the heart of all nature's ideal!
While adown the stream's current, a bark-boat
was drifting
Slow, because the monotonous sound of uplifting
And the dropping of oars on the surface was
still,
And the tide of the river bore it, by its will,
On and on, to the great Lake Superior—where
It still mingles with waters so deep from the air,
That one hardly can feel their immensity, while
In their calm on the shore they may ripple and
smile.
And yet slow, slow, but constantly moving along,

The bark-boat and the strong tide were drifting
with song
Of the evening—to where hid away in the deep
Of the distance and dark, the great lake lay
asleep.

Now the woods, even pine trees, and fir trees,
seemed more
Rich and luminous far, on the great waters'
shore—
And one dreaded, yet longed for that darkness
and gloom,
As the soul of man dreads and yet longs for
the tomb.

The prow was straight set, and the roses and light
Of the evening far back were forgotten in night—
Yet the girl in the boat, with her finely poised ear,
Tho' her soul was far sent into dreamland,
could hear

A wild music—for music was rising—from
where?

From the great reaching dark, and the night
and the air—

And a music that blended so much with the scene,
That its harmonies flowed forth in dark and in
green

Of the far-stretching forests, with rolling chords
 flung
From the region of mystery, whence they were
 sprung—
Till at last it grew calmer and sweeter—so sweet
That an angel in listening might hear the heart
 beat
Of a love in its tone, as if losing the sound
It had lost the weird wail of the darkness, and
 found
All the quiet of Heaven—where souls being
 free
Will sing ever—sing always—from mere ecstasy!

And yet then—and as if with a pitying thought—
In a cloud of soft melody—back it had brought
The girl's soul unto earth—with no too harsh a
 tone :

The melodious minor, the soft wind hath blown
O'er the face of the flowers—before the white
 snow

Of the winters will come, and the dear summers
 go—
And yet——

* * * * *

It was only a Heavenly scene,
With the large night hung close, like a mist veil,
 between;
And the music was only the heard, clearer part
Of th' unrealized yearnings within her own
 heart.
Then the maiden awoke, while the bark-boat
 went on,
Out of night, out of forest—and into the dawn!

“Yesterday and To-morrow Morn ”

TWO daughters to old Time are
born—

Yesterday and To-morrow Morn ;
And their Mother is To-day.
(One wears a garment new and gay,
And the other old and torn.)

For before the world began,
And the Earth had dreamt of Man,
In a region far away,
Father Time had wed To-day
In meadows soft where fair **brooks ran.**

And she never leaves his side,
She his old and faithful bride,
Tho' his hoary locks grow young,
When the daylight has begun,
Till the misty even-tide.

But the years are going fast,
And the Future and the Past
Are the wilful children sent,
When To-day and Time are blent
In a union great and vast.

Now one daughter is so fair
She has moon-light in her hair.
And her laughter is the trees,
Swaying gently in the breeze,
Softly waving here and there!

But the other is as cold
As a flower growing old,
And withered in a damp, dark, shade—
And yet there is a perfume made
From such flowers—so they hold.

A Feeling

A FEELING is a rain-bow in the sky
Of life, where many tints and colors vie
And blend, the whole great arch to
glorify—

Emotions of the grand and noble heart,
Planned in divine and overflowing art,
Each and yet all perform their separate part.

They are the tints and colors, many hues
Of heartfelt joys and griefs, smile-shines, tear-
dews,
Of pinks and yellows, crimsons, and bright-blues!

Nor can God's promise of no flood adorn
Or cross the firmament for us that mourn,
Unless it be by colored rain-bows born.

Nor can a feeling ever be complete,
Unless all strong emotions join and meet,
And all their different harmonies make sweet!

Would'st Thou Speak to Me, Bright Day?

WOULD'ST thou speak to me,
bright day?—

Me of griefs, and me of pains ;
Me, where all the heart's soft strains
Sound a discord on the ear ?
Hark ! do I thy voice still hear ?
Would'st thou speak to me, bright day ?

Would'st thou cease thine own wild play
With the sun-beams, golden bright ;
With all joy, and all delight,
With all gayety and glee ?
Would'st thou stop to speak to me ?
Would'st thou cease thine own wild play ?

Ah ! Thou speak'st ; thy voice is gay !
But I cannot hear it's tone.
Cease my spirit—cease your moan—
For one moment silence all :
Let me listen to that call—
Ah ! Thou speak'st ; thy voice is gay !

Woman

COULD woman's heart but add one strain
Of strength, still all its sweet retain,
 Its pearly streams would surely break
Into a glorious sun-set lake,
Where passion-waves would not be free,
But guarded, kept most tenderly
To add their force to under-tide,
And make one feeling grand and wide !

A Secret—A Sonnet

WHAT is this secret hidden and concealed
Past all the days that wake and come
and go—

Past wayward winds that in the spring-time blow,
And past the snows in Winter's heart congealed—
Past sun-rise, and the endless, restless flow
Of rivers bearing constant, on and on,—
Past moon-rise and the turbulence of dawn,
Forever breaking on the world below?
Unknown to all the little leaves and blooms,
Untold to all the giant elms and palms,
Unpictured to the panting light that swoons
Thro' woods and forests, reaching to cool
calms;
Undreaming of the quiet of the tombs,
It has within its breast no hopes—no balms!

Fall

THIS is the time when the old Summer
bendeth

Her head to receive a vast crown of red
gold.

This is the time when the blossom still sendeth
A fragrance that proveth it dying or old.

Ah, the soft rain that the garden still tendeth,
Now serveth it only with kisses turned
cold!

This is the time when the grass on the meadows,
The leaf on the tree, and the heat in the year,
Steal far far away, on the tip of the shadows,
To waver a moment and then disappear.

Asters that seem like the newly grieved widows
Will weep their past loves, with a ravishing
tear.

This is the time when the colors and blends of
them

Gleam ruddy on apples from the morns to
the eves,

While wild leaves slow fade to a brown on the
ends of them,

And gold groweth great in the heart of the
sheaves.
Tired days wane, with the burning red Suns of
them,
Where the harvest Moon smiles and her white
bosom heaves.

A Mood

CALM the morning falls from Heaven,
Dim and over-spread with clouds,
And the mountain-tops are driven
Back into their mists of shrouds.

And sweet rest is on the valleys,
Weary of their swaying grass;
For the sun far eastward tarries,
And the winds no longer pass

To and fro—but all are sleeping
Quiet in the soft gray sky;
And the peaceful Heavens are weeping—
It would save my heart, could I!

A Sonnet

WHAT are these mad repinings?—
Promises

Of the full harvests, of the golden grain
Of passions, ripened in the fields of pain?
In vain my mind my heart admonishes—
The past is dead; each day astonishes
The world by rising gloomily or fair.
The sun sinks fire, yet meager hint is there
Of what the Morrow's bosom nourishes—
And tho' the tears may rise and fall as fast
As tempest waves within a boundless sea,
Or drop the rains when skies are over-cast,
Still time is speeding and unchanged by me.
Then leave the wayward Future and the Past;
And let me sit and dream awhile—of thee!

A Ballad

THE hour grew late, the guests still sate
 Around the bridal board.
The wines were gone, the festal song
 Had died with its last chord.

II

The bride beamed fair; behind her chair
 The groom stood bent and still.
Up rose a sire in war's attire :
 " A story by thy will!"

III

Loud rang the cry of ecstasy.
 " Pray speak," the fair bride said.
His face gleamed pale—" I tell a tale
 Of one who now is dead."

IV

His eyes stared strange, they went the range
 Of space as sentinel's round.
But as he broke the trance, and spoke,
 They rested on the ground.

V

“ Thou wert a child, who laughed and smiled
 With lips as sweet as now.
Thy family dwelt by the sea,
 On a cliff's projecting brow.

VI

“ Thy family dwelt by the sea,
 On rocks that reach the wave.
Thy brothers made sand-wells, and played,
 (There stood thy mother's grave.)

VII

“ Three boys there were, and thou the fair :
 One had a patient soul ;
The next breathed forth, as wind from north,
 With power, sweep and roll,

VIII

“ And worked by hand, o'er fruits of land,
 With honesty and care.
Then came another, the last third brother,
 And thou, bright bride, the fair.

IX

“ Thy next in age, like to a sage,
Had brain of regal thought.
In wide book-lore, no man knew more ;
And vast his heart was wrought.

X

“ Yet as a tree that restlessly
Is swayed by every wind,
Wild fancies took vast hold, and shook
The quiet of his mind.

XI

“ He loved thee well ; thou hast heard tell
His love, by passion’s flow
Of kisses that broke on thee when woke
A spring bud flaked with snow.

XII

“ But after the field rich grain did yield ;
Nor scythe was worked nor plow ;
With the dead year did disappear
Thy brother—and knowest thou how ?

XIII

“ O’er this calm age rash war did rage
In lands where set of sun
Warns golden bright approach of night,
When our day is begun.

XIV

“ The countries all gave clarion call
For humanity’s stern cause,
To break the chains of base kings’ reigns,
That fettered feeble laws.

XV

“ I braved the fight, while left and right,
Close pressed in thick array
The men fell fast before the blast
Of shots that came our way.

XVI

“ The war smoke black made me give back,
And paused me for the night;
Then rushing on, in blear of dawn,
I stumbled in my flight,

XVII

“ And fell with wrath. Across my path
A soldier's body lay.
He seemed as dead, with bleeding head
From the victorious day.

XVIII

“ I pressed the hair, with no soft care,
From off the forehead high.
His limbs were stark, his eye gleamed dark.
I knew that death was nigh.

XIX

“ I could not brook the searching look
That from his eye did roll,
As unto Death. I held my breath ;
It scorched my very soul.

XX

“ And back I fell, with piercing yell,
When lights the fields did lave.
The features shone—thy brother's own—
God rest him in his grave!

XXI

“ Now giant Time three years sublime
 Had marked by Progress’ hand,
Ere from war stern my heart might turn
 Once more to its own land.

XXII

“ Shone ocean wide with moon’s fresh pride,
 Ere our ship kissed the quay.
When summer’s bloom thrice decked his
 tomb
Straight came I unto thee.

XXIII

“ But tho’ I came and breathed thy name,
 In greeting to thee here,
I could not bear the grief to stir
 For one thou didst hold dear.

XXIV

“ Yet dry the tear, for o’er his bier
 Vain Glory placed her rose.
To jubilee add victory
 Of his—nor weep his woes.”

XXV

Each head was bent, as right grief went
To each heart with the tale.
The look of age on the war-sage
Grew deep; the bride grew pale.

XXVI

While the groom's face had lost the grace
Of youth and beauty's glow.
The sage spoke on, in growing dawn,
The groom's pulse beat but slow.

XXVII

He held control, tho', o'er his soul,
As King o'er subject land,
And no one knew how his veins grew
Great on the firm white hand.

XXVIII.

The stare of eye was his reply
Of mourning for the dead,
Till the sweet bride, close by his side,
Lifted to him her head.

XXIX

The tender grace of her fair face
 Startled the man in him ;
His conscience woke, his deep voice broke
 On day, then rising dim.

XXX

“ Thy brother died. I by his side
 Had watched his dying breath ;
And still far more—I vowed and swore
 That I should be his death.

XXXI

“ For in my past, and hidden fast
 As secrets e’er can be,
There lay a sin that entered in
 Became a mystery.

XXXII

“ As floods that run to Western sun
 Sing not the far East’s song,
So in my breast I held in rest
 The secret of a wrong.

XXXIII

“ And yet one night, by moon’s pale light,
 We drank—both he and I—
At tavern’s round, and there he found
 That secret I put by.

XXXIV

“ My secret cast into the past
 Was open to his gaze,
As all the moods of life, like woods,
 Are seen by fierce fire’s blaze.

XXXV

“ And then ere long it grew a wrong
 Upon myself and thee ;
As one apart he judged the heart
 Full kind, that sinned in me.

XXXVI

“ But when it came, that thy fair name
 Should wedded be with mine,
I knew as brother he would discover
 My fault to thee and thine.

XXXVII

“ Yet, still I strove, and went to rove
At far, to rise above
My thoughts of thee, the agony
To crave thee for my love.

XXXVIII

“ And then the war swept the land o’er;
I fought with desperate might,
And in the blare of battle air
I felt my heart grow light.

XXXIX

“ Far hid from sight, and as in night
Was all, yes, all but smoke.
The sun seemed dead, yet rose full red
When through the line we broke.

XL

“ Right by my side stood he who died—
Thy brother in its light.
White gleamed his face (in hour of grace
May it for me gleam white)!

XLI

“ He stood there still. My heart beat till
I felt it in my throat ;
For thou wert mine, if in the line
I killed him (none should note).

XLII

“ But then from far, as 'twere a star,
A blaze fell from the sky.
The ranks rushed on, and in the dawn
By another did he die.

XLIII

“ And so with Fate, tho' oft we wait
Thro' weary life for peace,
From trial or dread, that Chance has bred,
'Tis Chance will bring release.

XLIV

“ And I fought on, out of the dawn,
With mine own heart in me ;
My battle-fire was my desire
That yearned yet for thee.

XLV

“ My battle-field I would not yield—
Not for his life nor mine—
Was smiles that play full blithely
And on thy fair lips shine.

XLVI

“ My battle throes were eyes that rose—
Thine eyes that hung above,
In mirrored art, o’er my rapt heart ;
My fight was for thy love.

XLVII

“ And now, fair bride, here by my side,
Wilt lay thy hand in mine ?
Forgive the wrong that, cleanséd long
In sorrow, may decline ? ”

XLVIII

The guests sate still, to wait her will,
To know her answer there.
The wines were gone, and festal song ;
The groom bent o’er her chair.

* * * * *

XLIV

The tale is old ; the grain is gold

At peace now by the sea.

The bride was young ; her answer sprung—

“ Yes ! For thou lovedst me ! ”

The Moon and the World

A BEAUTIFUL Moon rose proudly one
night,
And looked on herself with a pensive
delight.

And the white of her skin was as pure and soft,
As when she lay on the Saviour's loft.
And she saw from the deep of a pool in a dale,
Where weird lights glisten and waters turn pale,
The very effect of her loveliness, sent
Into their struggling and discontent
And sluggish uprisings.

And the Moon,
As she looked on herself, could almost swoon
From the ideal spirit-like visage seen
Through the tangled boughs of the forests green.
And she said to the World: "You have grown old!
And your fast excess of rotation has told
Upon you since you followed the sun
With a mad extreme when the day's begun.
And even the springs that pass over your heart
Have left the cold leaves of the autumn to start
Under the feet of the winters, and lie
Dead on the ground where the snows pass by."

The old World stopped, and held her breath,
And thought on life—and creation—and death ;
And then she replied with the dark night's moan
To the beautiful Moon in an undertone:
“Yes, oh Moon ! but you froze in your rest ;
While children sleep sweetly upon my breast.”

A Child—A Tale in Rhyme

I

THERE was once a little boy's spirit born
To a world of merriment all forlorn ;
For the beautiful mother God gave him
Had a sparkling eye and a conscience dim.
And when she saw the little red thing
Lying near to her, without feeling a sting
Of conscience, she feared least a care
Should rob her of one golden hair.
And she frowned on the lace in the richly
decked room ;
And the fresh flowers there that were all abloom
Looked sadly down on the little boy sent
Into that world of merriment.

II

But the little boy grew, and bye and bye
When a sturdy look came and he stood so high
He could touch her bed, the mother proved,
The doctor advised that he be removed.
So in a nursery kept far apart
He was given all that could please the heart

Of a little boy. All kinds of fair
And beautiful picture books were there,
And toys and sweets of every kind
To fascinate a childish mind.
And, tho' the nurse would often scold,
'Twas better than the days of old.

III

But suddenly there came a day
When the beautiful toys were thrown away,
And the Mother Goose book and the pictures all
Of the goblins short and the giants tall
Had no more fantasy, joy nor dread
For the little boy, and his curly head
Lay heavy in his dimpled hand
With thoughts he could not understand;
Until from out the dazzling black
Of blinded eyes a thought came back—
That, passing by, he oft had seen
A dark recess behind a screen.

IV

And then, at last, he knew not how,
The screen was pushed aside—and now
He stood upon a fur-rugged floor,
Oblivious of screen and door,

Or who should come, or who should see—
He stole into the library !
At first he did not like the hue
Of the dark-covered books—so grand and new,
And dull and strange and piled so high,
He could not reach them with his eye,
Until he came to where was placed
A bookcase filled for childhood's taste.

V

Ah, what he read! And all the hours
Were from November till the flowers
Began to bloom again, and he
Was deep in Fairy mystery.
He knew the tale of every maid
By some wild witch or wretch waylaid ;
And then of all the charmed knights
Who fought and helped them in their plights.
And so intense was all his store
Of myths and ancient goblin lore,
He felt and lived within their age,
As in his own world lives the sage.

VI

And far, and far, in childish dreams
He went to where the moonlight streams

Upon young lovers, and a book
Brings thought into an old man's look ;
And in his own, own little way
He pushed the clouds of life away,
And saw the angels in the sky.
There are two times before we die
When we can see far more than men—
The first is childhood's dreaming, then
When we grow old. But no one knew
The strange, weird way in which he grew.

VII

But one night late the little boy woke ;
The bubble force of a dream had broke
The sleep from his eyes, and a goblin tale
Shone in them as the moon did pale.
And his hand went up, and he rubbed his eyes.
His bed was placed so he looked on the skies,
And he, gazing, thought the star-beam he saw
Was a witch's silver hair. Her claw
Was the great dark tree. And a wee sob came
For the maid—he could not remember her
name—
Who was under the powerful witch's spell,
And his head no more on the pillow fell.

VIII

And the starlight waned not nor died away,
But grew so bright that he thought the day
Was coming in at his window. And soon
The pale, ghost-shivering, awe-striking moon
Would grow dim ! So he waited and sat as still
As if he were sleeping full soundly until
His nurse should wake him. But fairy dreams
came,

And he did so wish to remember the name
Of that poor, witch-tempted, beautiful maid
Of the fairy tale ! And the book was laid
'Way, 'way down in the library—while
He sprang from his bed with a naughty smile.

IX

All was dark on the upper stairs,
And by his wee little cot, unawares,
He stumbled on the rocking-horse back,
And clutched madly at its mane for lack
Of other support, until to this day
You can see the place where the hair's pulled
away.

And yet his purpose still did uphold,
As one often sees in th' unpolished gold

Of childhood set a wonderful stone
Of character, dazzling the eye alone ;
But down stairs it was very bright,
And the library, too, was lit that night.

X

And all was light in the parlors—all light
In the windows resting against the night ;
And the flowers there were as fresh and green
As the meadows breed them 'neath morning
 sheen,
And the vases stood tall with their patterns fair,
And the spirit of dancing was on the air,
And the great old chairs of the family heart
Were gone from the salons. In every part
Naught was to be seen of a family sign
But women and men and costumes fine,
While in the centre of all this stood
The woman who dreaded motherhood.

XI

The woman who dreaded motherhood smiled,
And the deep, rich mass of her long hair piled
In affected carelessness on her head,
As she nodded, let loose a ringlet as red
With a brilliant gold as any flower
That mellows the fields within summer's hour.

And everyone said that her mouth, like the
 moon,
Had a mystical curve on the end, and would
 swoon
Into a laugh with the magical charm
Of moody midsummer nights, which alarm
By darkness, and then are with moonlight
 beguiled,
While the woman who dreaded motherhood
 smiled.

XII

But the little boy passed the parlors, too,
Upon his way to the library, thro'
Perhaps losing his way, or perhaps by the glare,
Or perhaps it was only because aware
Of brilliance and gaiety hid from sight
Behind the curtains, he felt that night
A little curiosity—when
He was harshly told by the butler that “men
Only sit up.” But when, bye and bye,
He saw a strange lady and started to fly,
He found himself at the library door,
His bare feet treading upon the floor.

XIII

Had the little boy sailed over distant seas
In magic ships unto far countries,
And seen the myriad sights of the world,
No more of wonderment could be held
Within the large of his eyes sky shade,
Than the lights and the music that night had
made.

But soon he found by the bookcase old
The book where the goblin tale was told.
Then someone came through the door—his
mother—

And someone with her—not father—nor
brother—

And they stopped, and their voice had a tremu-
lous tone ;

For you know, they thought themselves alone.
But the little boy, buried within his book,
Had a chance when he heard the train rustle to
look.

And then it was, after a moment of fright,
He thought he would have an adventure that
night.

So the little boy came by the corner to peek,
When he saw something fall on the pink of her
cheek,

And then, growing bolder, he went all the way
To the table, as fearless as if it were day.
But a mouse, or something strange, that he saw
Made him quickly again withdraw,
And he waited breathless behind the case
Till a wicked book fell with a thud from its place.

XIV

And then—how is it that born within
A woman's breast nor sorrow, nor sin,
Nor petty life, nor selfish thought
Can kill the motherhood instinct wrought
By the Creator? But ever there,
Sometime or other, its wings will stir,
And bear the feeling over the soul
That makes a womanhood great and whole!
And how was it that the little boy lay
On her arm, as he had not for many a day,
And good night fell from her lips unaware
To the someone gazing with love at her?

* * * * *

XV

The little boy grew and he went to school,
And found in his heart that the measured rule

Of hour and moment and lesson and strife
(Tho' he hated the work) was the substance
of life.

His clever mind grew, as with all little boys,
To express the usual sorrows and joys—
But perhaps a little more keenly ; for he
Had seen as a child more than others could see.
While the woman who dreaded motherhood
smiled,
Now and then, from a true-hearted pride in her
child.

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